[fic] Quiet Night Aboard the Enterprise.

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Title: Quiet Night Aboard the Enterprise.
Author: **zekkass**.
Characters/Pairing: Castiel/Gabriel.
Rating: PG
Warnings: Angelcest, kissing.
Summary: Castiel isn't used to the *Enterprise* yet - and suffers a moment of panic for it. Cue Gabriel.
Notes: This is a fusion with Star Trek: The Next Generation, but I want to make it clear: you don't need any knowledge of Star Trek to read this. It'll mention a few characters from TNG, but there are no spoilers and really just me borrowing the setting for some Castiel/Gabriel interactions. ;)

Many thanks to **metaallu** for the beta!

Oh, and before I forget - this was written for **spn_in_space**. :D

(Standing on the other side is the reason he requested the Enterprise above all other vessels: Gabriel.)

There are three sounds Castiel has always been familiar with: his heartbeat, his breath, and the wind. Even inside he always knew (always trusted) that he could open the window and hear the wind, even on calm days where the air sat stale and hot around him.

The hum of the engines is a pale imitation of that constant reminder that he had both of his feet on the ground, that there was always somewhere safe to go, and it's all he can do to tune out the incoming panic: he's trapped by location and vocation, he's alone and he has nothing to rely on.

Space, that glorious ocean he has always dreamed of visiting - freedom from family, from antiquated familial customs, from structures on Earth he can't run from - he's afraid it will drive him mad from despair.

It's not an auspicious start to his stay on the starship *Enterprise*, and the thought causes a surge of panic which he controls with difficulty.

The door chimes, cutting through his troubled thoughts and reminding him even so that he has nowhere to turn to for safety. These are his quarters (small as they may be) and he trusts that they are his sole sanctuary, and yet - when a stranger knocks on the door here, there is no possible way he can pretend that he's not here. 'Computer, locate Ensign Novak' is a basic function of the computer here on the *Enterprise*.

The door chimes again, and with a guilty start he keys the door open. Standing on the other side is the reason he requested the *Enterprise* above all other vessels: Gabriel.

Gabriel looks up at him, eyebrows up, and Castiel swallows, abruptly nervous.

It's unexpected: he should say 'Lieutenant?' and he should remain professional at all times, but he hadn't expected his brother to even realize that he was here. He can't try for familial familiarity as he hasn't seen Gabriel in years, and in the end he stammers out a greeting:

"Gabriel?"

"That's me," Gabriel says, stepping inside the room, door swishing shut behind him. "You're supposed to be posted to the *Hood*. What are you doing here?"

There's no way he doesn't recognize him, Castiel thinks. He straightens, meeting Gabriel's eyes.

"I requested this post, sir, and Starfleet saw fit to grant my request."

Gabriel reaches out, fingering the insignia decorating the neck of Castiel's uniform. He's unreadable, and Castiel holds still, waiting for him to finish.

"Decided to follow me into space, eh?" Gabriel asks, finally dropping his hand. "How did you convince the family to let you go?"

"Sir - "

"Drop the sir when we're in private, Cas." Gabriel gives him a smile, finally. "It's good to see you."

Castiel blinks, raising a hand to fix his insignia. It may be only one pip, but he worked hard to get this far. "It is good to see you as well," he says. "Gabriel, I - "

"Answer my questions before you say anything else." Gabriel's vacillating between serious and friendly, and Castiel has to stop for a moment before he can continue.

He settles on the safest answer. "They were not aware of my decision until it was too late. The rest of it is a long story, Gabriel." He almost repeats Gabriel's name, because it has been too long and there are too many painful memories between him and his last memories of Gabriel, and too many harsh words about his errant brother from the rest of the family besides.

There's no response from Gabriel yet, and as Castiel watches he clasps his hands behind his back as he crosses the room, and he's visibly tense.

"Castiel."

The tone is serious. Castiel watches him, suddenly afraid for reasons he cannot articulate.

"Do you know why I came by your quarters tonight?"

"I assumed you recogni - "

"Yes, I did." Gabriel cuts him off again, still turned away from him. "I came for another reason. Counselor Troi felt something and tapped my shoulder for handling it."

Castiel lets his gaze slide away from Gabriel, suddenly guilty and angry all at once. He had known about the counselor, he knew there were species who could intrude in such a violating way, but to experience it first hand with the guise of it being for his benefit -

Fingers on his chin, hazel eyes meeting his.

"Whoa, whoa. Castiel." Gabriel's eyes are wide; he's concerned. "That's Michael talking there. Before you go and get angry at her, calm down. It's her job to pay attention to us, and believe me she'll be down here later to apologize."

"She sent you," Castiel says sharply. He *knows* it's Michael's influence that is clouding his judgement, and intellectually he knows it's wrong of him, but even so his trained gut reaction is a bitter taste in his mouth. He doesn't know if he ever will be used to it. "How did she know to send you?"

"You think I haven't booked a session or two with her? We haven't changed our last names, and besides: I've talked about you before."

Gabriel's fingers are still on his chin. Whatever was holding him tense and unfriendly earlier is gone, wiped away by the concern.

"You were panicked, weren't you?" Gabriel asks, quietly. "It sank in that this is your new home."

"It did," Castiel admits, looking away from Gabriel. "I will handle those feelings alone."

"Or you could come with me and let me show you one of the best places onboard... Not that it'll solve anything, but you look like you need a quiet place to sit and think."

"Sir," Castiel starts, but Gabriel pokes his nose. "Gabriel," he corrects himself. "Are you angry at me?"

Gabriel flicks his forehead, then steps back. "Well. I was, but that's not your problem. I'm not angry at you." He lifts his shoulders in a shrug. "Let's get going before we waste any more time of my off-hours."

"Now, we're technically not supposed to be in here," Gabriel says as he ushers Castiel into a darkened room - except for the stars, the endless expanse of lights suspended in the void.

Castiel's not embarrassed at all to realize that he has made his way directly to the row of windows, and he looks back at the rest of the room sheepishly.

"Impressive, isn't it?" Gabriel asks in low tones. It's not the sense that he's quiet to prevent them from being caught, but instead - respect? From Gabriel? Yet Castiel can look out at the stars again and understand exactly why Gabriel's speaking in hushed tones.

"There are other windows on this ship," Castiel murmurs, but he can't deny the attraction he has to the view.

"But how many of them are in even semi-private locations?" Gabriel shakes his head. "I can't break us into the Captain's quarters, and much as I love Ten-Forward it's just too crowded most of the time."

Castiel doesn't look away from the windows, not answering him, and for a time there is silence.

"...I've missed you," Gabriel says after a long string of minutes. "And the rest of the family. You'd think I'd completely forget my roots out here, but there's something about space that makes me feel nostalgic."

When Castiel looks he has a hand on a window. Despite the uniform and the location, it strikes Castiel how *small* his brother is. At that point Gabriel looks at him and in an imperceptible way he fills the room again. The universe beyond his palm is no longer an abyss but an ocean, and Castiel is reminded that Gabriel outranks him here.

"Why aren't you a commander yet?" Castiel asks before he can stop himself. It's moments like this that convince him that his brother should stand on the bridge of his own vessel, chart his own course, and yet -

Gabriel shakes his head, a smile lingering over his lips.

"I don't mesh well with responsibility," Gabriel raises his hands in a shrug, then snaps his fingers. "We need to go."

"Sir?" Castiel's so startled by the noise he falls back on his training.

"We can catch up on everything else later," Gabriel says, taking Castiel's arm in hand. "But right now we need to leave."

Castiel follows Gabriel's pull quickly, picking up on the urgency, and he glances back at the room, suddenly nervous. "What room was that?"

"Observation lounge, otherwise known as the briefing room for the higher-ups." Gabriel hustles them out into the hallway. "We'd probably be okay if we were found in there, but I don't think we should test our luck...okay, last stop before I send you back to your quarters."

"Where now?" Castiel asks as Gabriel leads him into what appear to be private quarters, and he has it: these must be Gabriel's quarters.

He can't help the sudden urge to look at everything, to see exactly how Gabriel decorates his home, but Gabriel turns to face him again, meeting his gaze.

"If you get into any trouble, and you need help...come to me first. I'll help you." He's completely serious, and Castiel can only nod in response.

Then he is pulled into a tight hug, and a kiss - a feather-light brushing of lips that makes Castiel's stomach flip over and elicits surprise and want - and Gabriel's giving him a gentle push so he stumbles back, and Gabriel actually looks afraid now.

"...you're still welcome to walk out and never talk to me again," Gabriel says, quiet.

Forget about space, forget about where he is and what he is now, forget the prejudices Zachariah drilled into him: Castiel does the only thing he can do, and reaches out to Gabriel, cupping his face and kissing him back, a light kiss but longer than the first.

"You're blushing," Gabriel whispers as their lips part.

"This isn't allowed...is it?" Castiel's blushing and guilty and not - all he can think of now are the two pips on Gabriel's shirt-collar.

"Castiel, *honestly*. We just kissed," Gabriel says, but the look he gives Castiel is serious. "We can chat, hold hands, whatever in public, and adhere to public standards of decency. Our on-shift relationship stays professional. And in private, no one cares what we do...unless we're making bombs and murdering each other, of course."

He puts his hands on Castiel's shoulders, looking up at him, and Castiel swallows. He understands, he enjoyed that kiss, and yet -

"Okay, I got it." Gabriel gives him a slightly bitter smile. "Can you tell me one thing, Castiel?"

"Yes."

"Did you reciprocate because you want me? Or were you just doing the right thing?"

Castiel owes him an honest answer. He can give him one.

"I," he licks his lips, as it is hard to say. "I am attracted to you," he admits. "And perhaps it is not right...but I love you as well." He knows that Gabriel won't mistake his meaning.

He has said the right thing: Gabriel is looking genuinely surprised and happy as well, and he is hugged again.

"Then we'll go slow - you're not getting off anytime soon, are you?"

"No," Castiel confirms, resting a hand on Gabriel's back. It's freeing to trust Gabriel, and when Gabriel doesn't let go immediately he shifts, subtly pulling Gabriel closer, grateful for his support.

It's not too long before he returns to his quarters alone, but he has a promise that Gabriel will meet up with him soon, and already the ship is beginning to feel something like a home. Even if the Klingon he passes in the hallway makes his heart seize in his chest, and even if he feels like a foreigner still.

His quarters are thankfully quiet, and he packs in for the night, listening to the hum of the engines.

It's not the wind, and there is a brief moment where he feels uneasy, shifting in his bunk - but it passes when he thinks of the stars beyond the hull and of how terrible it would be to drift directionless among them, and with a comforting thought of being able - being *encouraged* to hug Gabriel later he is able to let go of his troubles.

Sleep catches him soon after that.